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TAGS: PREL PREF PGOV UNSC IZ SY TY

SUBJECT: SRSG MELKERT BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL ON UNAMI ACTIVITIES

Classified By: Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (U) Summary: On November 16 Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Ad Melkert briefed the Security Council regarding UNAMI activities during the last quarter, emphasizing the recent successful passage of an election law while highlighting the work remaining to hold credible elections in January 2010. Melkert also set the stage for post-election UNAMI priorities: deep engagement with the issue of internal boundaries via the High-Level Task Force; continued support in the formulation of and action on the National Development Plan; and, normalization of regional relations, especially with Kuwait. Iraqi PermRep Bayati also addressed the Council, highlighting the upcoming elections and the continued security concerns raised following recent Baghdad bombings. He also reiterated the Government of Iraq's hope that the Security Council will "undertake its duty" to enable Iraq to restore its international standing to that which it enjoyed prior to 1990. During closed consultations members made interventions expressing thanks to UNAMI for its continued good work, especially in support of the recent passage of the election law, and the importance of ongoing national reconciliation efforts. End summary.

¶12. (U) Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Ad Melkert briefed the Security Council on UNAMI on November ¶16. This was Melkert's second address to the Council, but the first time Council members have heard from him following his first quarter on the ground in Iraq. Melkert used the occasion to provide an overview of significant developments during the reporting period, calling it a "period of great challenges and achievements." His briefing closely followed the recently released Secretary-General UNAMI report, focusing on the forthcoming January elections made possible following the passage of the election law by the Council of Representatives (COR) on November 8. He underscored UNAMI's serious concerns about the impact on election preparations of the late date in finalizing the law, calling it a "Herculean task to ensure that basic standards can be met." Melkert also set the stage for post-election UNAMI priorities: deep engagement with the issue of internal boundaries via the High-Level Task Force; continued support in the formulation of and action on the National Development Plan; normalization of regional relations, especially with Kuwait; and, an emphasis on promotion of human rights, especially for women. While his remarks did not expand greatly on the UN role with regard to refugees and IDPs, Melkert called the return of refugees and IDPs an "uphill task ahead."

¶13. (U) Iraqi PermRep Bayati also briefed the Council. He optimistically described the recent consensus reached by the COR on the election law as the initiation of a "new phase of responsible competition and collective work in Iraq, moving away from narrow loyalties in order to serve the general interests of the country," and thanked UNAMI for the

important assistance it provided to the Iraqi Government, in particular the Parliament. Bayati reminded Council members of the severity of the August 19 and October 25 Baghdad attacks, calling them operations "to cripple the capacity of the Iraqi state and its institutions and to disrupt the democratic political process" and recalled Iraqi Government requests to the Secretary-General seeking UN assistance on issues related to the security and sovereignty of Iraq. He welcomed the SYG's decision to send an international team headed by A/SYGOscar Fernandez-Taranco to Iraq for preliminary consultations, calling the visit a "first step, to be followed by subsequent steps, leading to the fulfillment of my Government's request to uncover those behind the deadly bombings in Baghdad." In conclusion, Bayati reiterated PM Maliki's affirmation to the Secretary-General last September, "that Iraq no longer poses a threat to international peace and security and that Iraq has fulfilled many of the international obligations imposed on it over the years, including those related to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait." He stated the Government of Iraq's hope that the Security Council will "undertake its duty" to enable Iraq to restore its international standing to that which it enjoyed prior to 1990.

CLOSED CONSULTATIONS

¶4. (C) Melkert expanded upon the recent adoption of the election law in closed consultations, noting that it now resides with the Presidency Council, which has ten days to accept or reject the law. If not rejected the law will

USUN NEW Y 00001051 002 OF 002

automatically be adopted on November 19. He highlighted concerns regarding VP Hashami's threat to veto the law over out-of-country voting (OCV) and compensatory seats, noting that UNAMI and the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) are in intensive talks with all concerned parties regarding this possible spoiler. In response to Council member questions, Melkert advised that the GOI may need enhanced MNF-I support to secure Baghdad-based election institutions. He also expressed concern regarding the increased complexity of OCV following the late passage of the election law.

¶5. (C) All Council members made interventions during closed consultations, expressing thanks to UNAMI for its continued good work, especially in support of the recent passage of the election law, and the continued election support UNAMI will provide in the coming months. Members expressed the need for January's elections to be free, fair, and secure. The majority of members highlighted the importance of national reconciliation, while Turkey said directly, "national reconciliation (in Iraq) remains elusive." Most members noted the August and October bombings and their concerns for Iraq's stability, with China expressing its hope that the GOI continues to build its national security force capacity so it can assume full responsibility and provide needed security. Russia called for inter-Arab cooperation in regards to Iraq's security concerns with Syria, and Turkey reiterated its offer to "play a constructive role in the region, to create a better atmosphere." Turkey also expressed its displeasure with the SYG's report language calling Turkish brokered talks between Iraq and Syria following the August bombings "inconclusive." A number of members, including Vietnam, Croatia, and Austria expressed support for Fernandez-Taranco's visit to Iraq. The UK, Japan, Burkina Faso, France, Mexico, Costa Rica and Libya called for Iraq to move forward on Iraq-Kuwait issues, including reaffirmation of the border.

Wolff